

Destiny: The Last Word

Ammon Leslie

FIRST DRAFT

A red handwritten signature, likely the author's name, Ammon Leslie, written in a cursive style.

CONTENTS

Contents	1
Prologue	2
Part One	7
Chapter 1	8

PROLOGUE

THE SIX FRONTS

Rezyl Azzir was a man.

Countless years had passed since his Ghost had found him and now he stood tall amongst the survivors of humanity. Banners flew high above the crowd assembled at the centre of what they soon hoped to be justified in calling a "city." They had come a long way, a very long way, but there was still the dire need to expand. The hope of thriving instead of merely surviving still seemed unobtainable. The hope of surviving had never burned stronger.

A large burden of that hope rested on Rezyl's shoulders, but it was a burden he was happy to bear. Even in the face of the largest Fallen assault since the Collapse humanity could recall, his presence brought light into the faces of the helpless.

People clamoured up close just to admire the intricate details of the gold embossings that adorned each individual piece of his armour, reminiscent of the Iron Lords that began what would become a legacy carried on by Rezyl and his comrades; the Guardians.

The founder of the Iron Lords, Radegast, started to part the crowd and approached the platform that had been raised in the centre of the area. Before he stepped up onto the stage he towered above the sea of spectators, and even dwarfed most of the Guardians present, as the Iron Lords all tended to do. But Lord Radegast towered above the other Lords, even Lady Jolder.

As he raised his massive stature upon the stage, there was a cry of cheers and chants awoken amongst the gathered. This was a

man who inspired more courage, hope and strength than any count of soldiers could muster. As he raised his armoured palm, the crowd quickly hushed in anticipation of his words.

"My fellow Lords, Ladies and Guardians, I call upon you now to lend me your strength, lend me your steel, and together we can repel these devils!"

A cheer arose once more to be quickly quelled again by the simple raising of a hand.

"We have arranged four orders of troops to be gathered. I shall lead one order with Lady Jolder and defend the northernmost two fronts. Lord Saladin and Shaxx shall take the Eastern two.

"The Southern front will be held by Lord Gheleon and the Western front will be taken by Lady Skorri and Lord Timur. Lord Felwinter will lead the other Iron Lords in a patrol that will run the ring of all fronts giving support where needed."

In the crowd, Rezyl heard murmuring amongst a few Guardians. *Four orders on six fronts? Impossible. Is this the end?* Yet he still held hope. Hope for the civilians, for the Guardians, his Guardians.

They looked up to him after their organisation from the Risen to the Guardians as a fore bearer, like the Lords of Iron aspired to Radegast. He hoped his Light was bright enough for his legions to follow.

A charge was bellowed, followed by the crack of flares launched from the watchtowers stood at each front. Suddenly, the threat was real. With a quick glance to the white behemoth floating

above the city, Rezyl ignited the flames within him and charged toward his position, and hope followed him.

At the front, silence broke through the chilled air. Night had fallen now, and the enemy ships that hovered just above the horizon had not made a move since Rezyl and his battalion had arrived at the front. Reports were coming in hot of skirmishes pounding the Northern and Western front. Lord Saladin and Shaxx had gone to assist, leaving Rezyl and Saladin's other protege Zavala in command at the Eastern fronts. However, as time passed, it seemed like that command wouldn't be needed.

Until a quiet hum and muted crack broke the silence.

Recognising the sound, Rezyl snapped his head towards the opening of the wall as the body of one of his sentries crumpled to the ground. The watchtower had yet to report any sightings of enemy activity, but Rezyl knew exactly what they were facing.

"Stealth Vandals!"

As he shouted, he noted the blur of a cloaked figure flail into the air in a sudden arc towards him. Rezyl swiftly grabbed and held the arms of the Vandal's top arms, but the Fallen creature had already dropped it's shock blades into the hands of it's smaller arms. One blade shattered against the solid steel of Rezyl's chestpiece, but the second had found a weak spot between between the armor plates. With a grunt, Rezyl heaved the creature away, and deftly swinging his auto rifle forward from his back, sprayed the distorted shape with fiery lead.

The impact of the rounds kept the Vandal from recovering ground between it and Rezyl as it's cloaking began to dissipate. The

creatures energy shielding finally burst, along with it's cloaking field putting, it in full view. Rezyl's clip emptied it's final few rounds into the Fallen's head as it burst into a dark, glowing gas.

The assault now seemed as if it had lasted a lifetime as the final Fallen ship came into range.

"Skiff inbound! I need a rocket!"

A Titan charged up to the front ranks and launched one projectile directly at the hull of the incoming ship, which was quickly followed by another round. The ship was briefly engulfed in a bloom of flames before rapidly descending to the ground for it's final fiery display.

Rezyl turned to meet the newcomer. "Saint, what are you doing here? What squad are you supposed to be with?"

"I was with Lord Gheleon, Sir." Saint-14's Exo voice was still recognisable through the thick plating of his helm. "The assault on the Southern front has ceased, and rumours of the Northern two are almost clear of Fallen."

"Finally. Any other news for me?"

"Osiris and Lord Gheleon are leading a sortie towards the South. reports say they've reclaimed almost 3 miles of land as we speak with promise of 1 more at minimum."

Those mad men, they're going to restore things more meaningful than just land with what they're doing. "Thank you, Saint."

Slowly, the fog of war began to lift off the city as well as out of the minds of the warriors who still held their weapons, vigilant in case of a secondary assault. But it never came. After weeks of onslaught, the six fronts were finally secured.

Guardians, Iron Lords, civilians, all people celebrated under the dormant Traveller. The heroes of the battle were made Lords, and the dead were given vigils worthy of legends. Progress was already resuming as Guardians discussed appointing leaders to a sort of command structure. The fortification of the walls resumed.

But Rezyl walked the city's streets alone.

Beside him his Ghost bobbed along, taking in their surroundings.

"Another victory," the small bot remarked.

"Yes, so it seems."

"It seems?"

"Yes."

A round of fireworks exploded in the distance near the foundations of the unfinished Tower, the main hub of activity in the city. Streams of coloured flame lit up the ebony skies in a magnificent boom of thunder followed by sharp cracks like ice fissures suddenly splitting.

However, Rezyl's flame had fizzled out before the battle had ended. Hope was still there, but his fervour was low, his pride residing only in his steel, his Inferno.

Walking into an empty courtyard to the south end of the City he sat down in the centre and gazed up at the Moon. Stories not

short of legends he had heard told of the old horrors that once upon a time scoured there, the scar upon its surface, a result of an ancient conflict, visible even now from the Earth below.

"Hope will see us through, Guardian."

"I know," Rezyl responded, "but hope won't stop the nightmares."

PART ONE

THE DAYS AT PALAMON

CHAPTER 1

THE EARLY DAYS

Palamon was a beautiful township, once.

Before the Collapse and the Fallen, it was a resort town of some sort. Situated in the confines of a lush forest under towering snow-capped alps, Palamon was a getaway destination worth visiting at least once in a lifetime. Not bustling like the busy hubs of Europa, and not such an exotic place to visit such as the islands whose names no longer exist, even in old stories. It was the perfect balance of discovery and life.

That was once.

The city hall that once stood as an architectural masterpiece of the Golden Age was reduced from its towering six stories to one, with a new view to the sky built in lieu of a roof. Vines spanned across whatever remained of the walls that had offered protection to the city so long ago. Palamon was barely worth naming an outpost, not nearly a refuge from the elements and the Fallen.

But this is where Shin Malphur was born and raised.

“Shin!” Cala screamed at the top of her child lungs, but Malphur dared not move in the case she had called him out on a ruse. “I see you, Shin! Centre tower, second floor, behind the pillar!”

Cala had found him, but he was not ready to surrender. He shuffled closer to the cold rubble and thought hard. Shin’s foot traced through the dust on the floor, and his mind found its plan.

CHAPTER 2

A LOST TRAIL

“Jaren, please, why are we here?” Polis pleaded once again. As a fellow Hunter, the rest of the fireteam had nominated her to ask this time.

“You’ll see, I promise. Just keep looking down the valley and they’ll march past soon.”

Polis sighed. “Who are ‘they?’”

“I’m not entirely sure. Maybe the House of Wolves are back.”

Jaren Ward lay low to the ground, still peering down the scope of his rifle. The AMR7 had seen much better days, but to a man of Jaren’s talents, that had little to no impact on its brutality.

“The AMR7 is useless.” Vell Tarlowe broke the hushed conversation with the booming voice of a Titan. Jaren turned back towards him preparing for the next ignorant phrase to come out of his face.

“Nice to reload, easy on the arms, but what’s the point when it can barely dent a pebble?”

INTERLUDE 1

WAR WITHOUT END

PART TWO

JOURNEY TO THE CITY

CHAPTER X

EXODUS